

United States Arsenal Foundry Building  
(now Porter Academy "Colcock Hall")  
167 Ashley Avenue (Ashley Avenue, Bee, Doughty  
and President Streets)  
Charleston  
Charleston County  
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-297

HABS  
SC  
10-CHAR,  
183D-

PHOTOGRAPH  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. SC-297

UNITED STATES ARSENAL FOUNDRY BUILDING  
(NOW PORTER ACADEMY "COLCOCK HALL")HABS  
SC  
10-CHAR  
173D-

Address: 167 Ashley Avenue (Ashley Avenue, Bee, Doughty and President Streets), Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina.

Present Owner: Medical College of South Carolina, 16 Lucas Street, Charleston, South Carolina.

Present Occupant: Porter Academy.

Present Use: Educational.

Brief Statement of Significance: A mid-19th century military building, altered.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Original and Subsequent Owners: United States Government; granted to trustees of the Holy Communion Church Institute by joint resolution of Congress, December 19, 1879. Name changed to Porter Academy in 1886. Sold to Medical College of South Carolina, August 30, 1963.
- B. Date of Erection: About 1844.
- C. Architect: Probably Edward Brickell White.
- D. Notes on known alterations and additions: Converted into a school classroom and administration building; probably the major changes were made in 1880, taking "several months." There have been repairs and alterations more recently (floor covering, plumbing, partitioning in hall of first floor), [physical evidence]. A few years ago clerestory windows were removed from the roof.
- E. Sources of Information: A. Toomer Porter, Led On (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898).  
News and Courier, Charleston, South Carolina, August 31, 1963.  
Ravenel, Architects of Charleston (Charleston: Carolina Art Association, 1945).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A utilitarian building converted into one for educational purposes.
2. Condition of fabric: Sound; finish fair.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Number of stories and bays, over-all dimensions, layout; Two stories; seven bays (three each side of wide central bay); about 54' x 88'; rectangular shaped.
2. Foundations: Very low.
3. Wall construction: Red brick, American bond (every fourth course of headers), pilaster strips each bay.
4. Structural system, framing: Load-bearing brick exterior walls and main partitions, other partitions frame. Two rows of columns support a heavy timber girders for second-floor framing. It is difficult to determine what is original and what may have been added on the interior of the shell.
5. Porches: Small modern rear porch.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The central doorway is double; doors have six molded panels each; rectangular glazed transom above, a narrow window on each side.
  - b. Windows: Wooden casement sash, opening in, with projecting drip molding on the bottom rail, with 14 panes in each half. Stone sills.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Hip roof with composition shingles.
  - b. Cornice: Consisting of four corbelled brick courses.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: First floor--a wide central hall of three bays each direction, with each end of the building divided into two schoolrooms. Offices and accessory rooms are

- partitioned off from the central area, adjoining the hall.
- Second floor--similar to first floor, with a classroom extending across the center of the front (over the entrance hall).
2. Stairways: A stairway on axis with the entrance occupies the rear portion of the hall. A wide straight flight of 21 risers terminates in a landing, with divided flights of four risers above. Heavy octagonal newels, molded handrails, turned balusters, open string.
  3. Flooring: Floors are presently covered with modern composition tile.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are plastered; those of brick are plastered direct. Some ceilings--apparently those typical of an earlier state--are of matched and beaded boards about 6" wide; others have been covered with plaster.
  5. Doors: There are several types. Some with four molded panels--of yellow pine--are probably original with the academic use; others of six panels (two tiers of three) also appear relatively old. It is possible that they may have been brought from older buildings.
  6. Trim: All openings have wooden architrave trim. A wooden base extends around the rooms.
  7. Hardware: Older doors have mortise locks. Wrought-iron bolts on casement windows appear quite old.
  8. Lighting: Modern electric fixtures.
  9. Heating: Central heating.
- D. Site: This building faces south toward the main driveway of the Academy campus, and is located about 200 feet east of the main building. It is near the northeast corner of the block occupied by the group.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect  
National Park Service  
August 1963